



South Central Emergency Response Program (SCERP)

Quarterly Report: July-September 2013



CfW beneficiaries busy working on Marerey irrigation canal in Afgoye District, Lower Shabelle



Completed Marerey irrigation canal in Afgoye District, Lower Shabelle

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1. Executive Summary

The South Central Emergency Response Program (SCERP) incorporated lessons learned from the Mercy Corps previous USAID OFDA-funded program, South Central Somalia and Puntland Emergency Response (SCAPE) to further assist the displaced populations and host communities who have lost their livelihoods to recover and build their resilience to better respond to future shocks and stresses. The program has engaged the Mercy Corps resilience framework and disaster risk reduction models for the interventions carried out, adopting more robust community mobilization and engagement methods for the initial quarter.

Under the *Economic Recovery and Market Systems sector*, the program engaged 495 beneficiaries through Cash for Work (CfW) to rehabilitate three kilometers of irrigation canals in preparation for the Deyr rainy season between October and January. These CfW activities were carried out in Lower and Middle Shabelle regions in South Somalia. The CfW approach is aimed at injecting cash into the local economies and enhancing purchasing power of individual household access to basic needs. A total of USD \$50,400 was transferred to 495 households during the reporting period. The beneficiaries were selected through respective Village Relief Committees (VRC) using a set criteria of one individual representing each household with priority given to female-headed households. A total of 210 (42%) women and 285 (56%) men benefitted from CfW by performing jobs such as clearing vegetation covers/bushes and collecting sand using wheelbarrows and sacks. In addition, the program distributed 480 CfW tools for rehabilitation of 3 km of irrigation canal, which were all handed over to respective VRCs for future use following the completion of the activities.

In addition, 10 existing small scale business cooperative groups for IDP youth and women were provided with small grants of USD \$10,000 as the first installment to expand their business ventures and facilitate their integration into the local market. For this sector, the SCERP program was also expected to complete the construction of river embankments in preparation for the Deyr rainy season to avert loss of productive assets in Lower and Middle Shabelle. However, by August, flooding was already reported in the Shabelle River which was attributed to heavy rains in Ethiopian highlands and localized rains in Lower Shabelle. In the meantime, Mercy Corps is coordinating with the Food Security Cluster on Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms that will save many hectares of land from flooding and allow continuous cropping.

Under the *Protection sector* the program carried out three GBV and three child protection trainings for 120 (61 female & 59 male) participants from various IDP camps in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Galkacyo.

Notwithstanding the precarious conditions, the program team managed to implement program activities and accomplish target objectives reaching both vulnerable IDPs and host community populations in the scheduled time frame.

2. Program Overview

Through USAID/OFDA funding, Mercy Corps Somalia has been implementing emergency programming since 2005, with the aim of supporting populations in both host communities and IDP camps to be able to respond and cope with both man-made and natural disasters. Currently, Mercy Corps is implementing the South Central Emergency Response Program (SCERP) targeting communities and IDPs living in Banadir, Juba, and Shabelle regions in the South and Galguduud and Mudug regions in Central Somalia.

The program is implemented under two main sectors to address the multi-faceted needs of the target population with an emphasis on building community resilience and disaster risk reduction, which includes enhancing skills and capacities to enable beneficiaries to respond and adapt better in the face of future shocks. The sectors are Economic Recovery and Market systems (ERMS) and Protection. The program utilizes the CfW approach and provision of business startup grants to cooperative groups for the purposes of injecting cash into the local economy and boosting the purchasing power of individual households to provide basic needs and improved resilience and recovery of the target beneficiaries in South Central Somalia. The program provides both preventive and relief support to reduce current protection trends and provide a safer environment for vulnerable women and children. The program has trained community elders in this quarter, in an attempt to establish a reporting mechanism in communities that will increase GBV reporting and service delivery while protecting the identity of GBV survivors.

3. **SECTOR 1: Economic Recovery and Market Systems**

Objective: Targeted households have increased asset base through immediate short-term employment and improved community and economic infrastructure.

Sub-Sector 1.1: Market System Rehabilitation

Activities 1 & 2: Rehabilitation of Irrigation Canal and River Embankments

A total of 3 km of irrigation canals were rehabilitated in three villages: Marerey, Jowhar, and Hawadley in Afgooye, Jowhar and Balcad District of Lower and Middle Shabelle regions, respectively. Rehabilitation was done in preparation for the Deyr rainy season between October and January. The CfW activity involved the digging of decrepit canals, removal of debris and sand, and the clearing of the canals of the vegetative growth. 210 women and 285 men have benefited from this CfW activity. The rehabilitated canals are currently benefiting 60 farmers and the irrigation canals rehabilitated along the Shabelle River are expected to improve the agricultural practice of the communities and increase crop production in dry areas and during periods of inadequate rainfall. Furthermore, the program tapped into the flooding of the Shabelle River channeling the water to the nearby farms through gravity flow to boost production.



CfW workers de-silting Hawadley irrigation canal in Balcad District, Middle Shabelle region



Completed Hawadley irrigation canal in use for farm irrigation

Activity 3 and 4: Rehabilitation of Markets and Market Feeder Roads (Bush Clearing)

During this quarter, an assessment of the feeder roads was carried out and the rehabilitation of these roads is scheduled to start next quarter in Kismayo, Mogadishu and Galkacyo. As well, an assessment of the fish market in Kismayo and markets in Mogadishu and Galkacyo were finalized this quarter and their rehabilitation expected to start next quarter.

Sub-sector 1.2: New Livelihoods

Activities 1 & 2: Disbursement of Business startup grants to cooperative groups (MicroStarts) and small industry entrepreneurship skills development

Mercy Corps supported 10 existing cooperative groups, established under the preceding SCAPE program, with a grants worth USD \$10,000 through the first installment made on the September 30, 2013. A total of USD \$10,000 was disbursed to ten existing women and youth cooperative groups (Hawo-Tako, Heegan, Hubane, Hurmo, Samawada, Gargaar, Hawl-Wadaag, Hodan, Siliga and Waberi) which have a total number of 76 beneficiaries (70 women, 6 men) selected from different IDP camps in Mogadishu, particularly Wadajir, Hodan, Dayniile and Hawl-Wadaag districts in Banadir region. Each cooperative group received USD \$1,000 as a business startup grant to boost their small business activities like tailoring, henna painting, tie & dye, and carpentry. The second installment of USD \$500 per cooperative will be made to the same groups after proper monitoring and follow up to ascertain the proper utilization of the current disbursement. The start-up grants and financial assistance are meant to facilitate integration of these businesses into the market system. After the grants were issued, Mercy Corps has been monitoring the progress of the cooperatives to ensure they have the necessary support to become more independent and self-sustainable in the larger market.

In the next three quarters, the program also plans to establish five new cooperative groups for soap making in Mogadishu, Kismayu and Galkacyo. The program has already identified and selected 24 beneficiaries in Mogadishu, eight in Kismayo, and eight in Galkacyo. The skills training centers have already been established this quarter and the first batch of training, which is to take place in Hodan District Mogadishu, is to start before the end of the first quarter.



Members of Hubane Cooperative group received a business start up grant worth USD \$1000



Members of other cooperative groups to be given grants

Sub-Sector 1.4: Temporary Employment

During the quarter, the program engaged 495 beneficiaries through CfW activities. The 495 CfW beneficiaries were engaged in de-silting and rehabilitation of three irrigation canals in Marerey, Jowhar and Hawadley villages in Afgoye, Jowhar and Balcad districts of Lower and Middle Shabelle regions. A total of 2,970 households benefited from cash transfers worth USD \$50,400.

Village Relief Committees selected the beneficiaries through selection criteria identified by the committees with the support of Mercy Corps program staff. 42% (210) out of the 495 total beneficiaries are women. In addition, priority was given to female-headed households with the role of less physically demanding tasks such as using wheelbarrows to collect sand and clearing bush.

A total of 420 CFW tools comprising of 20 wheelbarrows, 100 shovels, 100 pick axes, and 100 *Jembes* were distributed to the VRCs of each of the three villages. This is a sustainability strategy designed to enable community access to the tools to sustain these activities after the end of the program. Communities in these areas mainly rely on farming as their major source of livelihoods hence the rehabilitation of the irrigation canals will improve their livelihoods through increased agricultural production. The CfW beneficiaries are mainly vulnerable households and this is meant to provide them with cash income that can help them meet part of their household needs.

4. SECTOR 2: Protection

Objective: Enhance community capacity to respond to the care and protection of their women, children and adolescents through community mobilization, peace-building efforts, training, and activities for at-risk groups.

Sub-Sector 2.1: Gender-Based-Violence Prevention and Response

Activity 1: Medical and Nutritional Support for GBV Survivors

Mercy Corps has already began procuring the basic needs package containing nutritional support and the dignity kits. Twenty dignity kits have been procured for distribution to the GBV survivors. This will function as a short-term relief as they physically recover from the shock and impact of GBV. Although no new GBV cases have been identified, the challenge of GBV reporting in the target communities is enormous, however, within the next quarter, we expect this to change. The extent of rape and domestic violence is difficult to quantify but is documented as being widespread and possibly on the rise. With the capacity building training of community sheikhs and service providers, Mercy Corps aims to establish a reporting mechanism in the communities that will increase GBV reporting and service delivery while protecting the identity of GBV survivors.

Activity 2: Capacity building to improve GBV reporting and reduce the risk of GBV in camps

The program carried out three GBV trainings for 60 participants (20 each) in Mogadishu, Kismayu and Galkacyo. Seventy percent of the trainees were women. These trainings targeted mostly female elders who are revered by the community and will soon be spearheading the GBV sensitization in their communities. Community sheikhs and service providers such as police will be trained on GBV in the next quarter. Through the training, participants are becoming equipped with basic knowledge on forms of GBV, consequences, prevention and response to GBV, identification and reporting, and case confidentiality. The effort of these trainings will be measured in terms of the number of persons trained, knowledge and behavior change and improved reporting of GBV in communities.

Activity 3: GBV sensitization through video awareness and dialogue forums

Once the trainings in each target community have been completed, Mercy Corps will embark on video sensitizations spearheaded by the trained community elders, sheikhs and service providers, including initiatives linked to medical and police structures. This will be carried out in tandem with the broadcasting of GBV related messaging on the radio by the government. Mercy Corps acknowledges the intricacy of GBV programming, factoring in the safety and security of the community, and in particular GBV survivors and supporters of the survivors, in every step of implementing this sequential programming.

Sub-Sector 2.2: Child Protection

Activity 1: Formation and Support to CFS and community committees

Prior to the establishment of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), Mercy Corps trained different members of the community, including community sheikhs, elders, and youth group representatives in order to establish CFS committees. The program conducted three child protection trainings during the quarter. Sixty community members (41 male and 19 female) were trained on child protection and community advocacy in terms of prevention and response to violence against children, basic psycho-social support and counseling to children, child friendly spaces, reintegration of children involved in armed conflict or armed forces groups, and support to children with disabilities. Through these trainings community members are expected to understand and take the lead in advocating for children's rights by sensitizing fellow community members. Furthermore, the initial three trainings have targeted mostly men in order to encourage gender inclusivity of the community in their collective incentive to care for the children. Usually the responsibility of children is delegated solely to women and in a volatile context like Somalia, this often puts the children at risk of being abused. Gender inclusivity will help to establish a more communal approach to caring for children and to ensure a safe environment for them to coexist. The next trainings planned will target women who will be trained on the management of child friendly spaces.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The program team conducts field needs assessments before the start of every activity in each quarter to avoid duplication of roles with other humanitarian actors in the region. In an effort to ensure high quality CfW program activities, literate youth from the target beneficiaries are employed as supervisors to support the daily monitoring of activities. This strategy ensures the community's input in the day to day site monitoring of the CfW implementation.

6. Coordination

All program staff from the three offices (Mogadishu, Galkacyo and Kismayu) converged for one day inception workshop in Mogadishu for the launch of the SCERP program and discussed the way forward to ensure efficiency and quality implementation based on the lessons learned from the implementation of the previous program, SCAPE. Currently, the program team is working closely with other humanitarian actors in the areas as well as the local administration in the region. The program team signed MoUs with each of the village/camp committees and local administration prior to the start of implementation. The program team attends sector and cluster coordination meetings/workshops mostly held in Mogadishu to share the implementation progress, lessons learned, and challenges with the other humanitarian agencies.

7. Challenges/Conclusions

Flooding of the River Shabelle in Lower and Middle Shabelle regions in August 2013 affected the implementation schedule and the construction of river embankments in Jowhar and Balcad district that was scheduled to take place in October before the start of Deyr rain season. Stakeholder involvement and community mobilization at every stage of program implementation has enhanced quality of the program implementation and monitoring by local authorities, VRCs, beneficiaries, and Mercy Corps leading to ownership and sustainability of the program by the beneficiaries.